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ONE HUNDRED TENTH CONGRESS

U.S. House of Representatives
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March 20, 2007

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The Honorable Albert Gore, Jr.
2100 West End Avenue
Suite 620
Nashville, TN 37230

Dear Mr. Vice President:

Your appearance before our Committee tomorrow is timely. We are developing a record to help Congress decide whether and how to rationally react to concerns about climate change.

Because it is a joint hearing with twice the usual number of Members participating, many of our colleagues are concerned that it will not be possible for them to elicit your thoughtful responses to some key questions. So we share those issues with you now in hopes that you will address them in your extended opening statement.

1. In response to a letter we recently wrote to President Vaclav Klaus of the Czech Republic we received a compelling set of answers that put the global debate on climate change policy in a new perspective for us. Our letter to President Klaus and his response are attached in their entirety, but we would ask you to focus particularly on his response to our question about moral imperatives. President Klaus said:

"The moral obligation of developed countries to the developing countries is to create such an environment which guarantees free exchange of goods, services, and capital flows, enables utilization of comparative advantages of individual countries and thus stimulates economic development of the less developed countries. Artificial administrative barriers, limits and regulations imposed by developed countries, discriminate the developing world, affect its economic growth, and prolong poverty and underdevelopment. The environmentalist proposals are an exact example of such illiberal policies that are so harmful for the developing countries. They will not be able to cope with the limits and standards imposed on the world by irrational environmental policies, they will not be able to absorb new technological standards required by the anti-greenhouse religion, their products will

have difficult access to the developed markets, and as a result the gap between them and the developed world will widen.”

Is it possible to reconcile the moral imperative that President Klaus articulates with what some say is a moral imperative to ration CO₂ globally? Are you prepared to ask the United States to act unilaterally, or even to ask only the developed countries to act when emissions growth is so pronounced in the non-developed world?

2. Bjorn Lomborg, who will testify immediately after you, convened many of the world’s leading economists to address global problems. The result was the famous “Copenhagen Consensus,” a prioritization of world problems that should be addressed by international efforts. It turned out that climate change consistently fell to the bottom of the list while malnutrition, communicable disease prevention, unsafe drinking water, and trade barriers that constrict growth and opportunity in less developed countries were at the top. They argued that such a massive cost with so little benefit was not a good use of scarce economic resources. Do you believe that the Copenhagen consensus is wrong?

3. We all have the experience of hindsight, once actions we’ve taken have been tested by history. In hindsight, was signing the Kyoto Treaty on behalf of the United States really a good idea? If so, why did your Administration never send it to the Senate for ratification? Why have so many countries that did ratify it fall short of their commitments, some even abandoning the effort altogether? Do you think the prestige of international institutions is imperiled if treaty obligations are not met?

Meanwhile, have all the positive efforts the United States has taken since Kyoto been wasted merely because the United States did not ratify the Treaty? We refer to the billions we’ve spent advancing climate science; our aggressive development of renewable energy; energy efficiency gains that lead the world; technology research and development for alternative vehicles and fuels; and our efforts to share clean energy technologies with the rest of the world. Won’t rationing energy simply drive U.S. manufacturing offshore where it will not be as clean as we require now in this country?

4. The widely reported hyperbole in your movie, “Inconvenient Truth” (see, e.g., *The New York Times*, March 13, 2007; *The Wall Street Journal*, January 18, 2007) may adversely influence public policy because it suggests that certain cataclysmic developments – sea level rise, extreme weather, extensive droughts, disease epidemics – are imminent unless mankind acts immediately to reverse greenhouse gas emissions. Even the best guesses of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change fall far short of the dire consequences dramatized in the movie. In *Grist Magazine* you explicitly acknowledge, in your words, “overrepresentation of factual presentations.” What is your motive for the “overrepresentation?” Are you worried that your issue must compete for attention and resources with those other global issues that are already compelling and do not need Hollywood hyperbole such as the millions of lives lost each year to malnutrition, AIDS, malaria, poverty, unhealthy water, and hunger?

The Honorable Albert Gore, Jr.

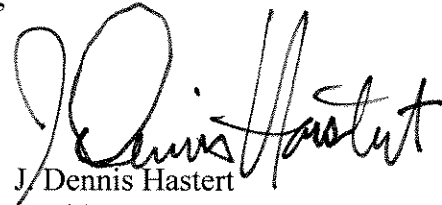
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We look forward to seeing you tomorrow and hearing your responses. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joe Barton". The signature is stylized with a large, sweeping initial "J".

Joe Barton
Ranking Member
Committee on Energy
and Commerce

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "J. Dennis Hastert". The signature is stylized with a large, looping initial "J".

J. Dennis Hastert
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Energy
and Air Quality

Enclosures

cc: The Honorable John Dingell, Chairman
Committee on Energy and Commerce
The Honorable Rick Boucher, Chairman
Subcommittee on Energy and Air Quality